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A Scientific Basis for the Granting of
School Credit for Music Study

ARTISTS' DIVISION
(GRADE SIX)

CHAPTER V

PREPARED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF OF THE

National Academy of Music

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V

PETRARCH'S SONNET
No. 123

ANNEES DE PELERINAGE
No. VI

FRANZ LISZT

Some of the most beautiful piano works of Liszt are to be found in the collections entitled "Years of Pilgrimage." The first year comprises nine pieces from Switzerland; the second, ten pieces from Italy, of which this is No. VI. This and Nos. 4 and 5 are all inspired by the beautiful sonnets of Petrarch, and in the original are entitled Sonnette de Petrarca, Nos. 47, 104, 123. The last is the most universally known and admired.

Petrarch (1304-1374) exerted a powerful influence in his time, in his relation to the revival of classic learning in Italy, although he is best known as a writer of sonnets, and in particular of his sonnets to his loved one, Laura. His love for Laura is one of the great love stories of history. The student should become familiar with the romance and with the sonnets if he aspires to an understanding of the piece, the impulse which moved Liszt to compose the music, and the intellectual processes involved.

The Introduction, *lento placido,* must be played with great freedom, in the style of an improvisation. Markings cannot adequately indicate this style, though those given should prove valuable guides both as to interpretation and touch. In particular the student must observe the *portamento* touch in passages so indicated. The song which follows the Introduction must be played with the tonal charm and freedom which a good singer or violinist would employ.

The third section (30) commences in a hesitating style, which grows bolder and more decisive until the climax is reached (37). The subsequent change of tonality (41) brings back the song theme, this time with exquisite tenderness. The dynamic indication [*ppp*] here and in the following measure refer more particularly to the accompaniment. The melody must be clearly heard at all times.

Observe the difference in the tonal registers between measures 41-44 and 45-48. Thinking in an orchestral idiom will help to illumine the effect here.

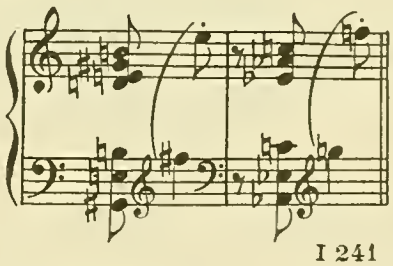
After the approach of the chief climax (49) the next twelve measures should be played with a fervent abandon, at no time, however, allowing the melody to be lost. The piece closes with material which has been formerly presented.

The trills and ornate passages must be played with great delicacy. The lower fingering is Liszt's own, while the other fingering may be found more practical for the average hand. The Double note passages (36) may be played smoothly, by resting on the fifth finger while shifting the hand to the first and third fingers.

The passage leading to the *fortissimo* (38) can be played easily if the phrasing is observed and if the performer plays with a rigid wrist, using the entire forearm from the elbow. The first of each group of two chords must be attacked by lifting the hand and arm somewhat above the keys. The last note of this *fortissimo* may be played with the thumb of the left hand, supported by the hand, or by the second finger, braced against the thumb.

The Trill (65) should be commenced slowly, and gradually increased until maximum speed is

Illustration No. 1



I 241

obtained. The fingering 31213121 will be found most practical. The two notes *B* and *C* (67), should be attached to the preceding passage and the Trill commenced in the same manner as the previous one.

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The playing by alternating hands, of the two-note motive in Triplets, which appears in the last few measures is emphasized in the Liszt editions, with a notation similar to that shown in Illustration No. 1; the *quarter* note of the Triplet group is played by the left hand and the *eighth* note by the right hand: In the present edition the use of the *una corda* pedal is also shown by a sign previously employed, the letter *P* with a downward, slanting stroke through it indicating the depression of the pedal, and an upward, slanting stroke, its release.

Better to grasp the spirit with which Liszt endeavored to permeate the work, there is given a free translation in verse of the original Sonnet by Petrarch.

PETRARCH'S SONNET

No. CXXIII

Here on this earth I've seen, unknown, unknowing,
The charms of heaven in human transformation.
Such memories, both of sadness and elation,
Make of all else a dream, from shadows growing.
And tears I've seen, in eyes whose splendor glowing
Has roused the sun to envious imitation.
A voice I've heard, whose softest invocation
Would move the hills, or stay the river's flowing.

Love, wisdom, pity, strength together sounded
In harmony, a sweeter chord conveying
Than any other, since the world was founded.
And not a leaf upon a tree was swaying,
While heaven itself with silence was surrounded
To catch the melody that they were playing.

—Edith Sanford Tillotson.

Music is preeminently the art of the intellect, though not generally so regarded. Its true substance is thought and not sensuous excitement.—*Dr. Bartholomew.*

SONETTO CXXIII DEL PETRARCA

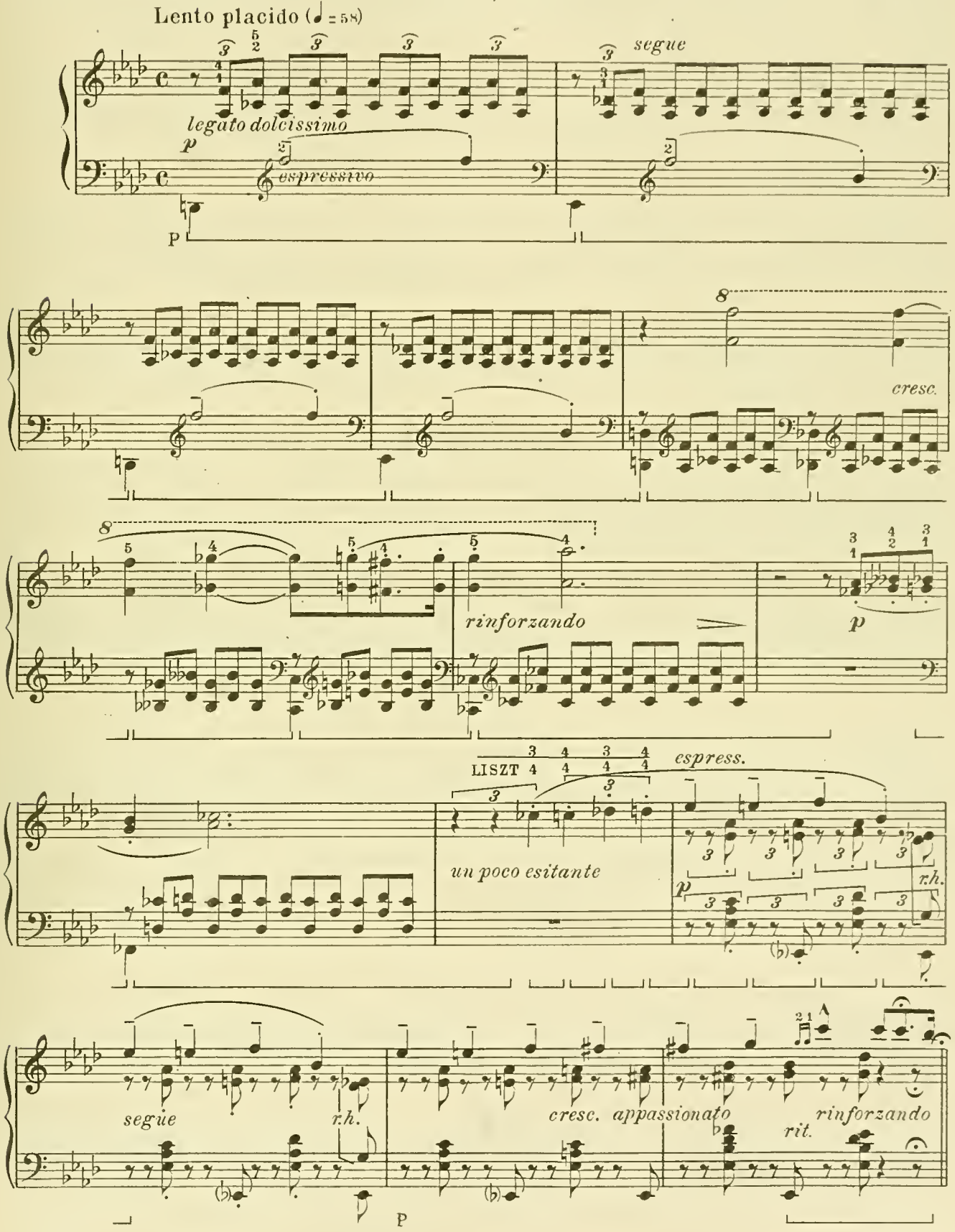
PETRARCH'S SONNET Nº 123

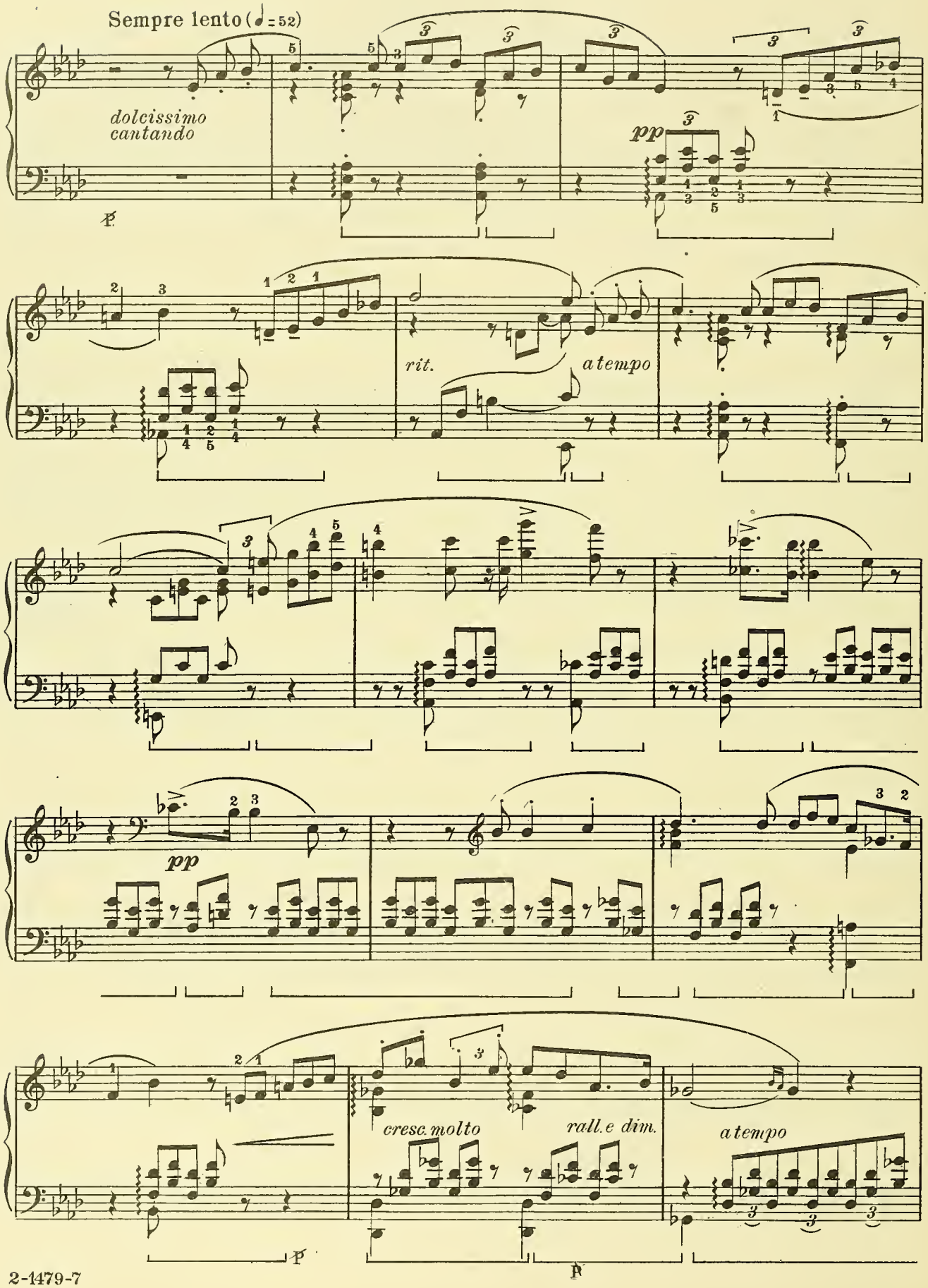
"Années de Pélerinage"

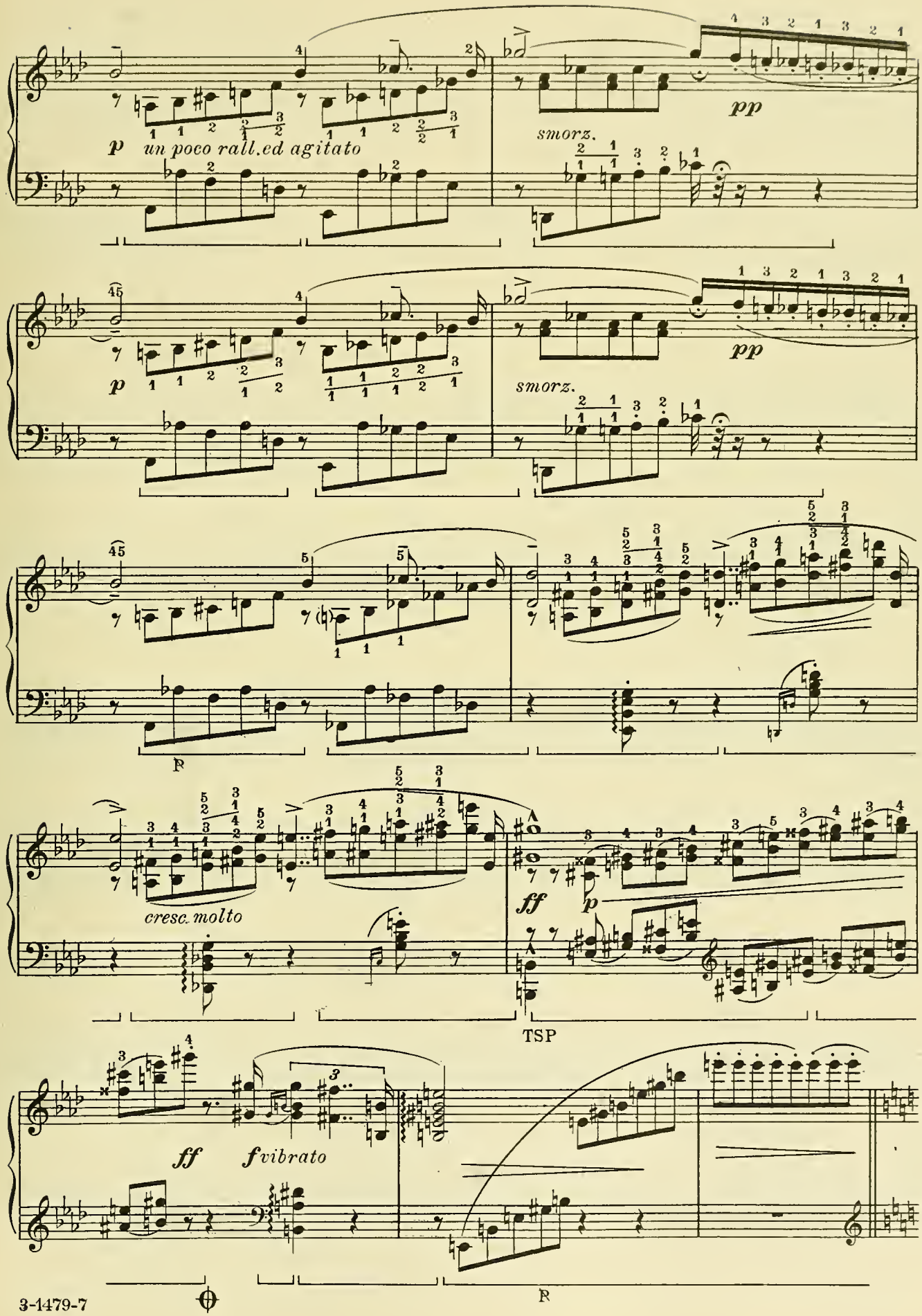
2nd Année, Nº VI

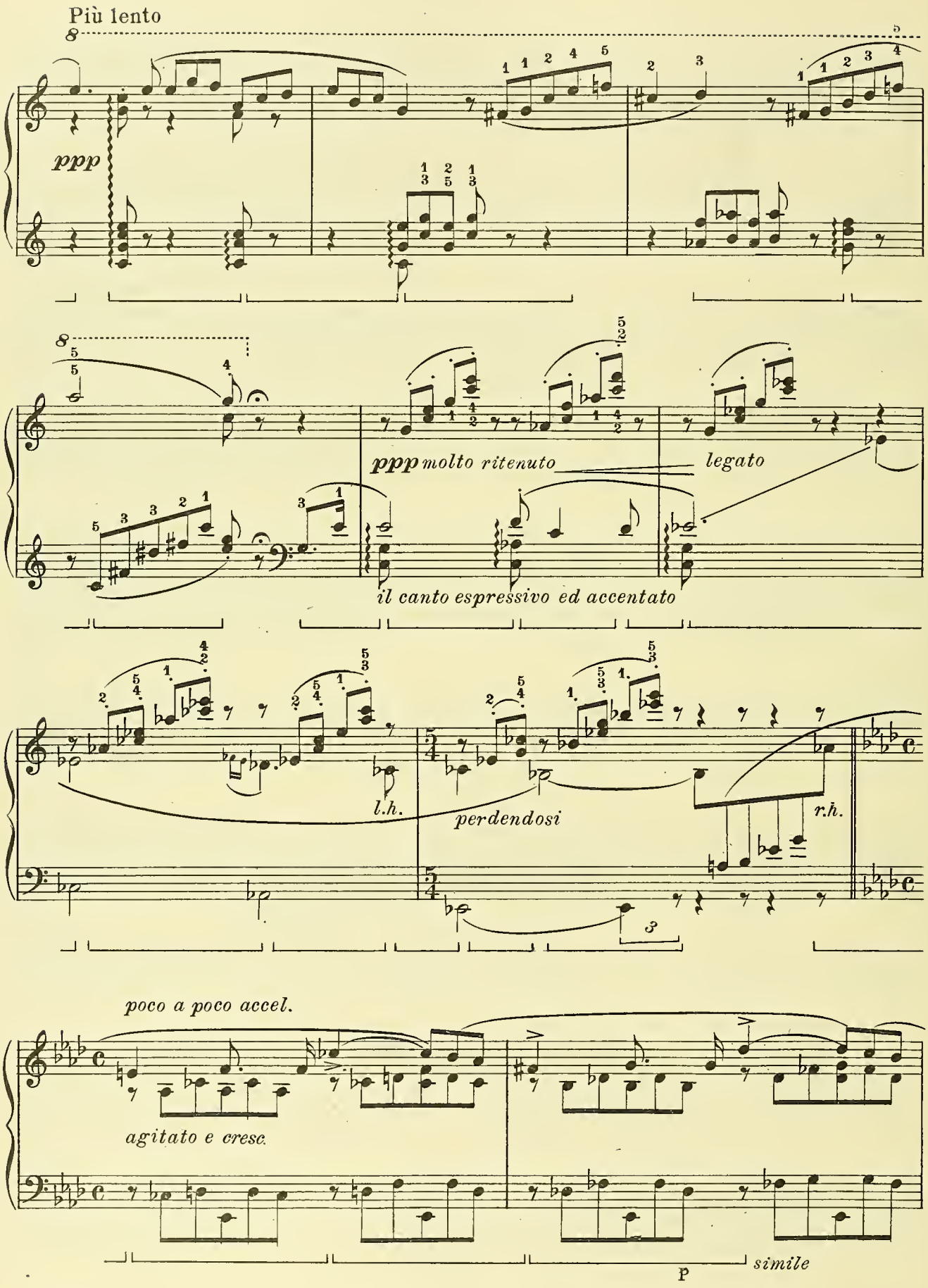
Edited by
Vernon Spencer

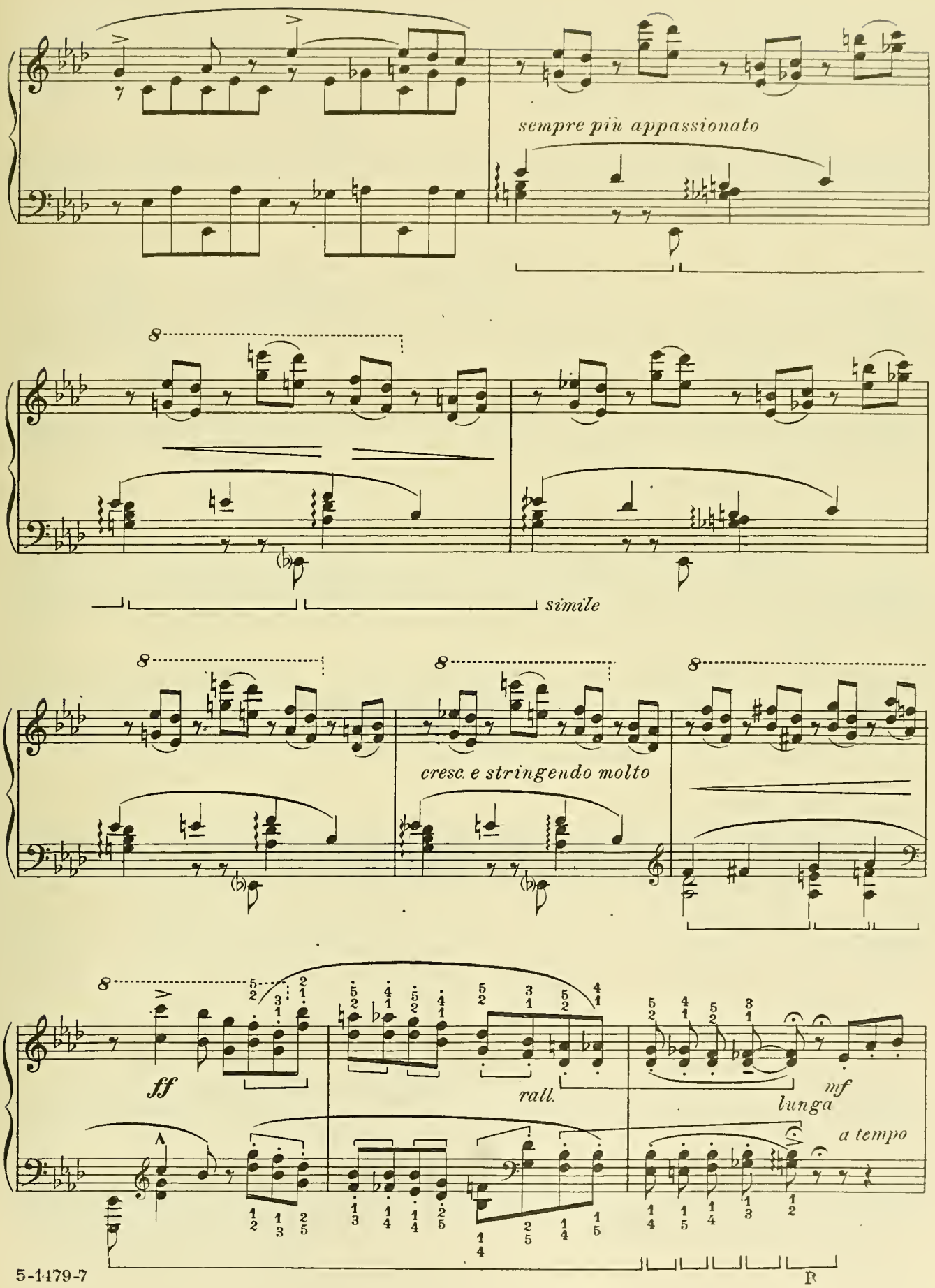
FRANZ LISZT

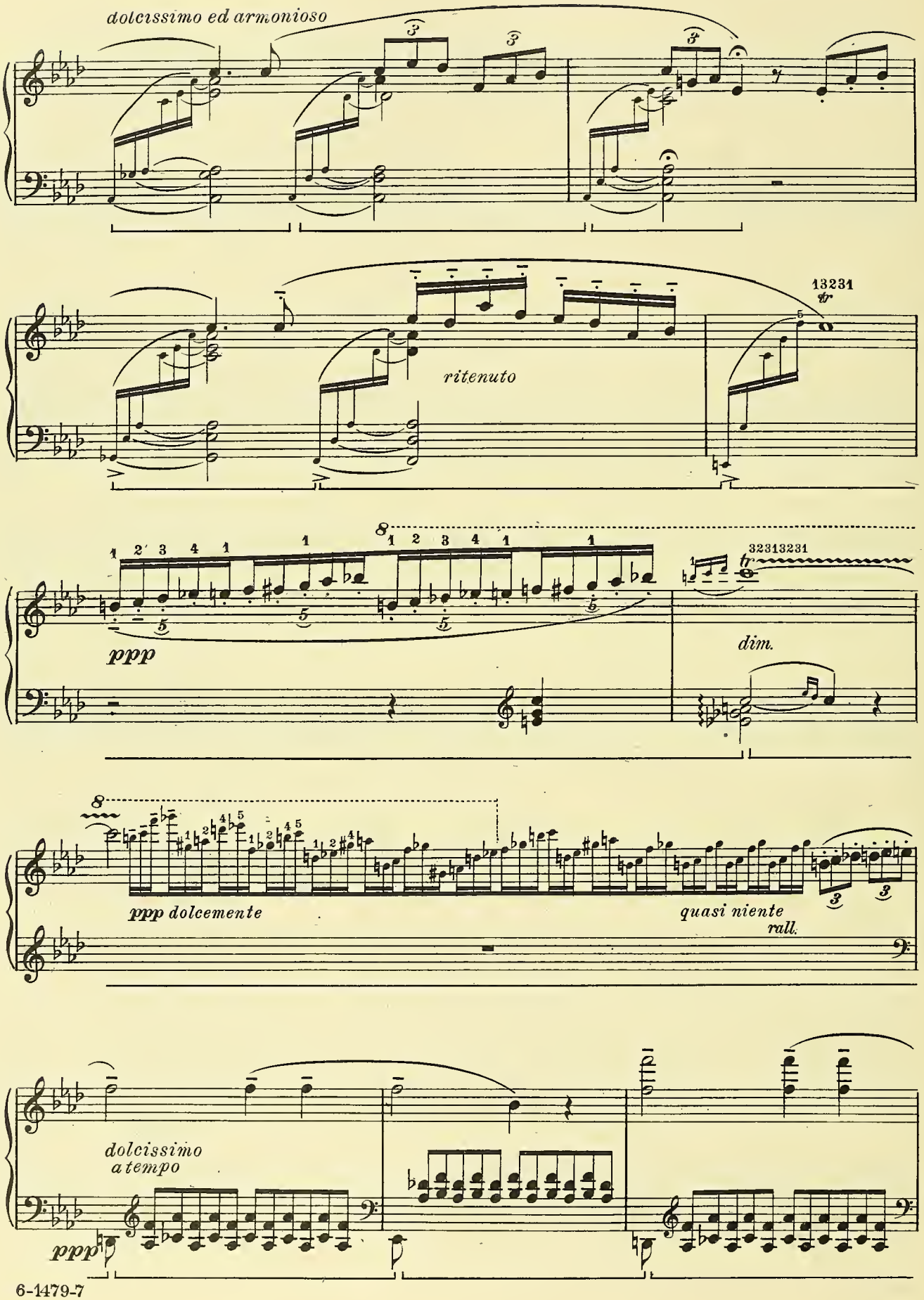


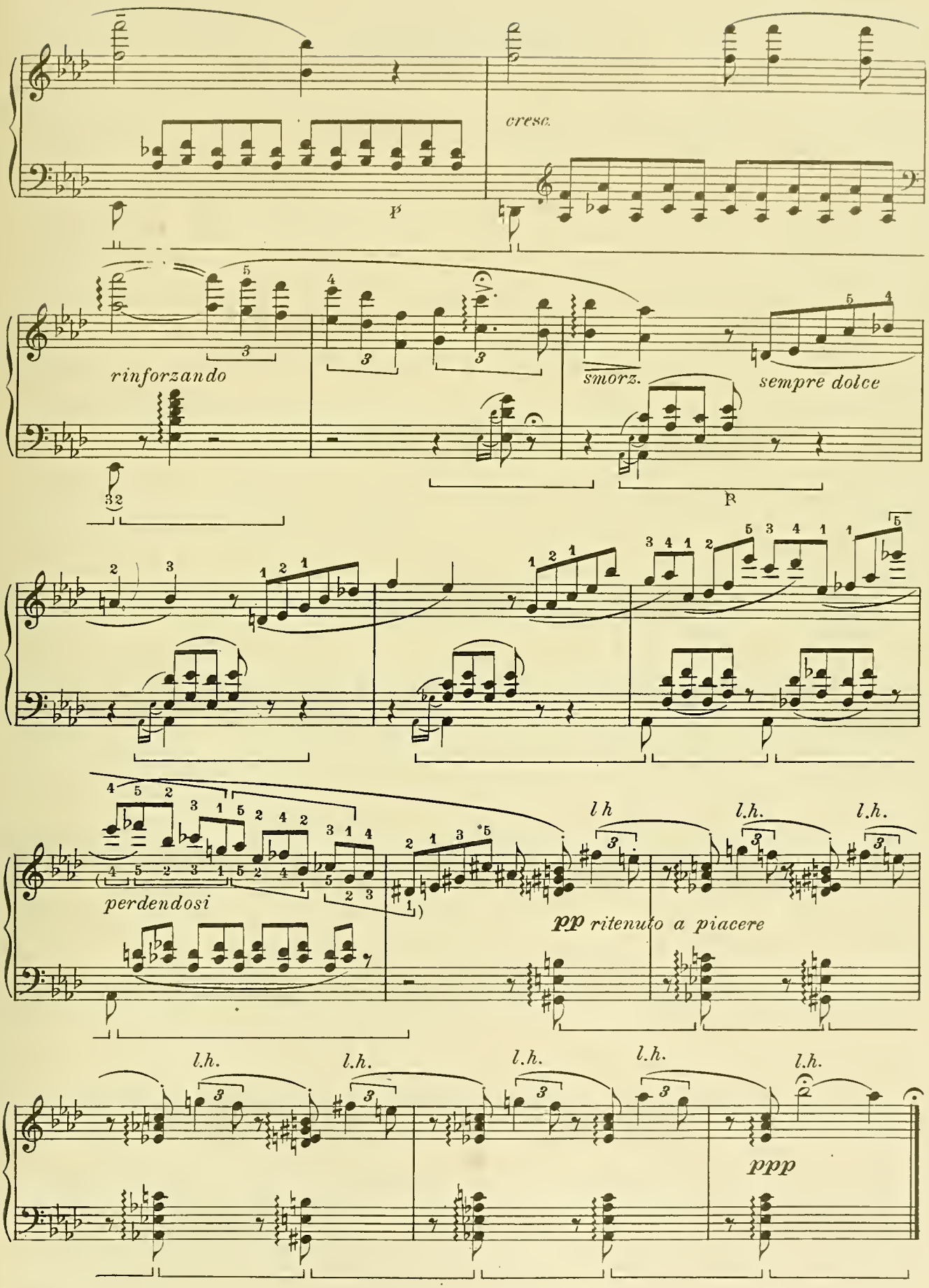

Sempre lento (♩=52)
dolcissimo
cantando
pp
rit.
a tempo
pp
cresc. molto
rall. e dim.
a tempo


p
un poco rall. ed agitato
smorz.
pp
p
smorz.
pp
cresc. molto
ff
p
TSP
ff
f vibrato


Più lento
ppp
ppp molto ritenuto
legato
il canto espressivo ed accentato
l.h.
perdendosi
r.h.
poco a poco accel.
agitato e cresc.
p
simile


sempre più appassionato
simile
cresc. e stringendo molto
ff
rall.
mf
lunga
a tempo


dolcissimo ed armonioso
ritenuto
13231
ppp
32313231
dim.
ppp dolcemente
quasi niente
rall.
dolcissimo
a tempo
ppp


p
cresc.
rinforzando
smorz.
sempre dolce
perdendosi
l h
l.h.
pp ritenuto a piacere
ppp

MEMORANDA

MEMORANDA

MEMORANDA

CHAPTER EXAMINATION

1. Who was Petrarch? When and where did he live?

2. What is a sonnet?

3. What is the effect of the *portamento* touch recommended for use in the Introduction?

4. Outline the form of this Sonnet.

5. Why is the fingering 31213121 recommended for the Trill in meas. 65?

6. Write the song theme, in the Key of C, and from memory.

7. What can be said of Liszt's treatment of the piano?

8. Write in a different way some of the passages which seem to permit of other methods of notation, such as indicating the duration of tones sustained by the pedal, etc.

Student Percentage

Examined by Date

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